OFF BASE

Origin and History

At some time in the unrecorded past—thousands of years ago—an area of some 2,400 square miles was dropped, or depressed,

about 100 feet below the surface of a vast coastal plain. When underground movement jarred the plain upward, the sunken area rose and became what is now known as Antelope Valley.

The Paiute Indians were the first known human inhabitants of the area. The first white visitors were most likely Spanish navy deserters, members of the Portola party traveling in the valley's vicinity in 1769. In pursuing these deserters, Lt. Pedro Fages, one of Spain's Catalonia volunteers, reached the southern end of the Antelope Valley in 1772. His diarist reports that Indians were seen lurking behind what were thought to be date palms, but were actually Joshua trees.

The year 1776 brought Father Francisco Garces and three Indian guides from the San Gabriel Mission. Garces recorded his views of the vast land that was then called El Tehon Rancheria, or the Badger Ranch, of the Cuabajoy Indians. In 1834, Kit Carson and Gen. John C. Fremont came through the valley and remained long enough to establish what is known today as Fort Tejon Road. Wildlife was so plentiful at that time that three geese were killed with one shot at Lake Elizabeth. Grass and desert growth was luxuriant and pools of water stood in many places over the valley floor.

The first determined settlers chose the Lake Elizabeth region and the foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains. The general area became known as the Antelope Valley because of the immense herds of these animals. Yet, hunters and severe winters in the late 1800s decimated the herds.

The Southern Pacific Railroad, between San Francisco and Los Angeles, was completed in 1876 with the rails from Los Angeles having been placed as far inland as Soledad Canyon to the south of the valley. The frantic race between the two large opposing work forces

The Antelope Valley is a grand expanse of blue skies and sunshine radiating in every direction from Edwards Air Force Base. To the south and west are majestic mountains and to the north and east, the undulating endlessness of the Mojave Desert.

ended with the ceremonial driving of the golden spike to join the rails and heralded the opening of the Antelope Valley to the outside world.

By 1890, the Antelope Valley was in a very prosperous condition, especially in the southern portion–Lancaster and Palmdale. Land seekers and settlers had come in large numbers. Many families with financial means settled in the eastern segment of the valley to begin raising grain and fruits and related agricultural products.

The year 1898 was a year of "firsts" for the valley. The previous year, borax had been discovered in the United States, and, in 1898, it was found that an immense deposit of borax lay beneath the desert landscape of the Antelope Valley. Within the same 12 months, gold was discovered in Rosamond. Men working the mines made their way across what was known then as Rodriguez Dry Lakebed, to and from work, on a V-shaped wagon rigged with sails.

The age of aviation came to the Antelope Valley in the 1930s when the Army Air Corps began training operations on the shores of the dry lakebed at the Muroc Bombing and Gunnery Range, now Edwards Air Force Base. During World War II, the dry lakebed "floated" a huge wooden battleship—the Muroc Maru—constructed to train bombardiers in the use of bombsites. Runways now bisect the lakebed.

Today, the Antelope Valley has learned to successfully blend the traditional pursuits of business, commerce, industry, agriculture and mining with the technology of the aerospace frontier, while remaining a place where people prefer to live and visitors return time and time again. This high desert area is known for its contributions to the defense of the nation with its close proximity to existing Department of Defense facilities, including Edwards, Air Force Plant 42 and China Lake Naval Weapons Center.

Valley Location
Antelope Valley, one of many valleys in the Mojave Desert, is bordered by the San Gabriel Mountains to the south, the Tehachapi Mountains to the west, the greater Mojave Desert to the north and Victor Valley to the east. Rosamond, Mojave, California City, Boron and the greater part of Edwards lie in Kern County in the northern part of the valley. Lancaster, Palmdale, Quartz Hill, Littlerock and the southern-most sliver of Edwards lie in Los Angeles County in the southern and central part of the valley. The eastern part of the valley falls within San Bernardino County.





ANNUAL EVENTS

MARCH

Almond Blossom Festival

Quartz Hill (661) 722-4811

This unique local festival features a myriad of blooming almond trees on nearby Quartz Hill. The event also hosts the Almond Festival parade, one of the oldest parades in the Antelope Valley. The event is held the second weekend in March.

APRIL

California Poppy Festival

Lancaster City Park, Lancaster (661) 723-6077
Celebrating Lancaster's most colorful seasonal visitors, the California Poppy, this event offers continuous family entertainment, wildflower arts and photo contests, an arts and crafts bazaar, environmental booths, unique cuisine, and free "Poppy Express" shuttle buses to and from the California Poppy Reserve. The event is held every April.

Ridgecrest/Inyokern Airshow and Balloon Festival

Inyokern Airport, Inyokern, Calif. (760) 375-8787

The Airshow and Balloon Festival features hot air balloons, balloon rides, static displays and an airshow featuring military and civilian performances. Admission is free, but there is a parking fee. This event is sometimes held in April though traditionally in mid October.

JUNE

Tehachapi Valley Arts Association Spingtyme Fair

Tehachapi City Park, Tehachapi (661) 822-1118

The two-day fair features arts, crafts, food booths, games and entertainment. The event is typically held the second weekend in June.

Indian Powwow

Indian Hill Campground, Tehachapi (661) 822-1118

This cultural and religious gathering of Native Americans features dance competitions, craft and skill demonstrations, and story telling. The event is ordinarily held the third weekend in June.

JULY Wind Fair

Benz, Visco Sports Complex Tehachapi, (661) 822-4180
This bi-annual celebration features stage and strolling entertainment, renewable energy exhibits, wind farm tours, and earthen arts and crafts. The next Wind Fair will be held in 2003.

AUGUST Mountain Festival and Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association

Tehachapi City Park and Rodeo Grounds, Tehachapi (661) 822-4180

The biggest attraction for the year in Tehachapi is its Mountain Festival, coupled with the PRCA Rodeo. The festival and rodeo feature an arts and craft fair, more than 100 vendors, a pet parade, a Saturday night western dance and a classic car show. The festival and rodeo are held the third weekend in August each year.

Antelope Valley Fair and Alfalfa Festival

155 East Ave. I, Lancaster (661) 948-6060, www.avfair.com
The annual fair features concerts, carnival rides, livestock competition, bake-offs and children's shows.
Also included in the weeklong festivities are displays from Edwards and other local aerospace organizations. The fair is held each year in late August through early September.

SEPTEMBER

Rosamond Armed Forces Appreciation Day and Parade

Diamond Street, Rosamond (661) 256-3248

Downtown Rosamond celebrates and honors the armed forces with festivities that include a float parade and guest speakers. The event is on the third Saturday in September.

Aerospace Walk of Honor Celebration

Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster (661) 723-6053, www.cityoflancasterca.org

The ceremony attracts visitors to Lancaster Boulevard for the unveiling of granite monuments honoring Edwards' test pilots whose aviation careers are marked by significant flight test achievements. The annual event is held in September in conjunction with the Society of Experimental Test Pilots convention.

OCTOBER Palmdale Fall Festival

McAdam Park, 30th Street East and Palmdale (661) 267-5611

This family celebration features crafts, fine arts, games, live entertainment, international food booths and an aerospace exhibit. The event is held the second weekend in October each year.

DECEMBER Lancaster Old Town Site Hospitality Walk

Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster (661) 942-1573

The businesses of Lancaster's downtown district open their doors to the community the first Friday evening of December. The businesses offer entertainment, food, refreshments, holiday crafts and music. The event is the business district's way of thanking the community for their patronage throughout the year.

ATTRACTIONS

◆ Aerospace Walk of Honor

Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster (661) 723-6053 www.cityoflancaster.org
The Aerospace Walk of Honor hosts granite monuments honoring Edwards
Air Force Base test pilots whose aviation careers are marked by significant flight test achievements.

Blackbird Airpark

25th Street East and Avenue P Palmdale (661) 277-8050

The Blackbird Airpark, dedicated in September 1991, is the world's only display of a Lockheed SR-71A together with its Blackbird predecessor, the A-12, and the once ultra-secret D-21 drone. The park is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Calico Ghost Town

Yermo, Calif. (800) 862-2542
The Calico Ghost Town treats spectators to gunfight reenactments, historical shops and mines. Camping facilities, as well as RV hookups, are available. It is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except for Christmas.

◆ Devil's Punchbowl

28000 Devil's Punchbowl Road Pearblossom, Calif. (661) 944-2743
Devil's Punchbowl is a 1,300- acre park with a system of hiking trails, including a one-mile loop down a 300-foot-deep canyon. A visitor's center features an exhibit of native animals such as snakes, antelopes and owls. Picnic facilities are available.

◆ Exotic Feline Breeding Compound Mojave-Tropical Road Rosamond

(661) 256-3332

A wildlife compound dedicated to preserving rare and endangered felines, the compound is home to more than 40 cats from 15 different species. The compound has an adopt-a-cat program to encourage community members and visitors to become foster parents to the cats. The compound is closed Wednesdays.

Kern River Whitewater Runs

Lake Isabella, Calif. (760) 379-5236

The river is a favorite place for whitewater rafting and hosts tours May through September. Children under the age 8 are not permitted.

◆ Lake Isabella

Lake Isabella, Calif. (760) 379-5236

Lake Isabella, created in 1953 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dammed the Kern River, flourishes as a tourist center for fishing, boating, camping and picnicking. Boats for fishing or lake exploration may be rented at marinas along the shore. Detailed information is available at www.kernrivervalley.com.

◆ Lancaster JetHawks Baseball

45116 Valley Central Way, Lancaster (661) 726-5400, www.jethawks.com

The Lancaster JetHawks are the California League Class-A farm team for the Arizona Diamondbacks and provide baseball enthusiasts local entertainment at the Lancaster Municipal Stadium. A military discount of \$1 per ticket is offered with the exception of general admission (grass seating) seats.

◆ Lancaster Performing Arts Center

750 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster (661) 723-5950, www.lpac.org
The center provides top-quality
entertainment as well as the finest
symphonies, ballet troupes, holiday
performances—such as "The
Nutcracker" and "A Christmas
Carol"—and musical performances
of every kind, including jazz, classical, pop and more. Military members
receive a 10 percent discount on
LPAC season events.

Los Angeles County Raceway

6850 E. Ave. T, Palmdale (661) 533-2227

This quarter-mile drag strip, featuring National Hot Rod Association drag racing and the annual Palmdale meet, is open 365 days a year. Schedules and information can be found at www.lacr.net.

◆ Palmdale Playhouse

38334 10th St. East, Palmdale (661) 267-5685 www.cityofpalmdale.org
The Palmdale Playhouse features a 360-seat theater and provides a wide variety of entertainment in its season lineup: country, jazz, dramas, children's programs and dance.

◆ Tehachapi Loop

Tehachapi, Calif. (661) 822-4180
Railroad fans flock to the Tehachapi Loop where the spiraling Southern Pacific main line makes a 360-degree turn as it climbs from the valley to the mountains. More details may be found at www.tehachapi.com.

◆ Twenty Mule Team Museum

26962 Twenty-Mule Team Road Boron, Calif. (760) 762-5810

The Twenty Mule Team Museum features a 20-mule team wagon display, a replica of that used more than 100 years ago for long distance hauling purposes. The center also offers insights on the many different ways borax is used and how it is excavated from California's largest open-pit mine. The museum is open seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Willow SpringsInternational Raceway

3500 75th St. West, Rosamond (661) 256-2471/6666
The raceway hosts many types of international racing nearly every weekend to include Showroom Stock Endurance Racing, Indy Car Racing, motorcycle, ISMA, CANAM and many others. Schedules and more information may be found at www.willowspringsraceway.com.

Wind Turbines

Tehachapi Mountains, Tehachapi (661) 822-4180

The Tehachapi area is the world's largest producer of wind-generated electricity and hosts a mountainside of turbines, A wind turbine captures the energy of the wind to drive a generator. As the generator turns, it produces electricity.

Where team Edwards members live

Community	% Edwards' military	% Edwards' civilians
Boron	1	1
California City	17	10
Edwards	33	0.13
Lake Los Angeles	1	1
Lancaster	21	43
Littlerock	0.09	0.49
Palmdale/Quartz Hill	3	7
Pearblossom	0	0.18
Rosamond	24	21
Tehachapi	1	7
Victorville	1	9.2

Boron

Population: 3,002

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg: 23 Elected official: chamber of commerce president, James Welling School system: Muroc Unified School District, (661) 258-4178 Chamber of commerce: 26962 Twenty Mule Team Road, Boron, Calif. 93516, (760) 762-5810

Web address: www.rnrs.com/20MuleTeam

Located northeast of Edwards along California State
Highway 58, the one-stoplight community of Boron is the
site of a giant open-pit mine—from which the extracted
element, borax, lends the town its name. The pit, the largest
in the Western Hemisphere, is owned and operated by the
U.S. Borax and Chemical Corp. and employs a great deal of
the community. Edwards employs the remainder.

The town's people invest themselves in the preservation of the rich history of both Boron and Edwards. Kern County provides the community's branch library, fire station and sheriff department. The U.S. Post Office is centrally located on Boron Avenue.

California City

Population: 8,787

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 17

Elected official: Mayor Larry Adams

School system: Mojave Unified School District, (661) 824-4001 Chamber of commerce: 8001 California City Blvd., California City, Calif. 93505, (760) 373-8676

Web address: http://city.California-city.ca.us

Begun as a private commercial development, the community was incorporated in 1961 and ranks as the third largest incorporated city, in terms of land area, in California.

Located northwest of the base along Highway 58 and a northern jaunt on California City Boulevard, the small community offers all the enhancements of the original developer's grand vision: easy shopping, an 18-hole golf course and a central park offering swimming, boating, fishing, illuminated tennis courts, basketball and volleyball courts, picnic facilities, barbecue pits, children's playgrounds, bicycle, rentals, and a marina facility.

Churches

Nearly all faiths and denominations are represented in the Antelope Valley area. Local chambers of commerce listed on the following pages can provide detailed information.

Lancaster

Population: 123,147

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 29

Elected official: Mayor Frank Roberts

School system: Antelope Valley Union High School District, (661) 948-7655; Eastside Union School District, (661) 946-2813; Lancaster School District, (661) 948-4661, Westside Union School District, (661) 948-2669.

Chamber of commerce: 554 W. Lancaster Blvd., Lancaster, Calif.

93534, (661) 948-4518

Web address: www.cityoflancasterca.org

A thriving, civic-spirited community, Lancaster has enjoyed unprecedented growth and prosperity in the last decade. During this time, Lancaster has grown to be the commercial and business center of the Antelope Valley and promises to continue such growth.

With proximity to the Los Angeles metropolitan area and yet clean air and blue skies, the community is an affordable choice conveniently located to much of southern California's attractions and aerospace industry employment. Lancaster has a council-manager/administer form of government with five elected council members and 230 full-time employees. All public safety services, including police and fire, are provided by the County of Los Angeles, while the sheriff's department performs contract-based services, and the fire department performs under a Fire Protection District approach.

Mojave

Population: 3,863

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg: 35

Elected official: Unincorporated

School system: Mojave Unified School District, (661) 824-4001 Chamber of commerce: (661) 824-2418 or call the Kern Economic Development Corporation at (661) 862-5150 (www.kedc.com)

Web address: www.kerncog.org

Mojave sits at the junction of California Highways 14 and 58 and to some is a gateway to such popular spots as Mammoth and the Eastern Sierras, Las Vegas, Eastern Mojave Desert and the Los Angeles Basin. But Mojave itself is the location of several natural wonders and historical sites that include mining ghost towns and more.

Anyone driving through Mojave is certain to notice the Mojave Airport. Known to many as the civilian flight test center, the airport is unique in its locale and environmental conditions and is known both for its flight-test activities and for the maintenance and storage services provided to the airline industry.

North Edwards

Population: 1,343

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg: 9

Elected official: none

School system: Muroc Joint Unified School District, (661) 258-4178 North Edwards is an unincorporated bedroom community just north of Edwards along Highway 58. School-age children go to school at Edwards. Housing is affordable, though shopping convenience is limited.

Palmdale

Population: 123,717

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 39

Elected official: Mayor James Ledford

School system: Palmdale School District, (661) 947-7191; Wilsona

Elementary School District (661) 264-1111

Chamber of commerce: 38260 10th St. East, Palmdale, Calif.

93550, (661) 273-3232

Web address: www.cityofpalmdale.org

Located south of Lancaster along California State Highway 14, Palmdale's biggest industry—and employer—is aerospace. Thousands of residents are employed at Air Force Plant 42 Production Flight Test Installation and Edwards Air Force Base.

Plant 42 is a huge complex including more than 8 million square feet of covered space. McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed and Northrop have produced jet aircraft there. Producers, manufacturers, wholesalers, government and business services comprise 76 percent of the city's employment force. Natural resources also provide employment in the fields of sand, gravel, rock and cement production.

A community with projected growth, Palmdale has a civic foundation in the Palmdale Cultural Center, Palmdale Playhouse and Poncitlan Square, a park fashioned after one in Poncitlan, Mexico, Palmdale's sister city.

Quartz Hill

Population: 16,984

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 35 School system: Westside School District, (661) 722-0716 Chamber of commerce: 5021 West Ave. M, Quartz Hill, Calif. 93536 (661) 722 4811

93536, (661) 722-4811 Quartz Hill, a small

Quartz Hill, a small, primarily residential, unincorporated community, is situated just four and a half miles west of Lancaster and Palmdale. Residents enjoy the rustic qualities of the town with horseback riding on many trails, fishing in the nearby California Aqueduct, and a view of nature. The community is known for its almond orchards and the annual almond festival parade.

Rosamond

Population: 14,950

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 19

Elected official: Mayor Dee Ewing

School system: Southern Kern Unified School District, (661) 256-5000 **Chamber of commerce:** 2861 Diamond Street, Rosamond, Calif.

94560, (661) 256-3248

Just a straight shot west of Edwards along Rosamond Boulevard, the small community of Rosamond is a mecca for rockhounds with its cradling and abundant hillside landscape of beautiful rocks—especially at Gem Hill, located four miles north of the community.

Kern County provides fire and police protection in addition to supporting a community recreation building and park with lighted baseball diamond. Agriculture pertinent to the area includes alfalfa, sugar beets, potatoes and onions. The community also hosts a community/senior center.

Tehachapí

Population: 27,907

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 45

Elected official: Mayor John Rombouts

School system: Tehachapi Unified School District, (661) 822-2100 Chamber of commerce: P.O. Box 401, Tehachapi, Calif. 93581,

(661) 822-4180

Located in the mountains about 45 miles from the base and about 4,000 feet above sea level, Tehachapi offers a cool alternative to the warm Mojave Desert summers.

Tehachapi has a rural atmosphere with farming as a way of life for many residents. Award-winning livestock are common in the area as well as famous apples, pears and cherries.

Area residents visit Tehachapi year round for the Mountain Festival, the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association Rodeo in August, the apple and pumpkin harvest in the fall, and the cool mountain breezes in the summer.

Victorville

Population: 64,500

Miles from Air Force Flight Test Center Headquarters Bldg.: 55

Elected official: Mayor Terry Caldwell

School system: Victor Valley Union High School District, (760) 955-3200; Victor Elementary School District, (760) 245-1691 Chamber of commerce: P.O. Box 997, Victorville, Calif. 92392,

(760) 245-6506

Web address: http://vvchamber.com

Located to the east of Edwards in the high desert of Victor Valley, Victorville is accessible via interstates 15 and 395, conveniently linking the city with all other areas of Southern California.

The community encompasses approximately 68 square miles and has experienced an annual growth in population of nearly 19 percent.

COLLEGES

Antelope Valley College

30th Street and Avenue K
Lancaster
(661) 943-3241
Antelope Valley College offers a diverse selection of two-year academic and vocational programs.

California State University Bakersfield

Antelope Valley College Campus 30th Street and Avenue K, Lancaster (661) 664-2011

Cal State University Bakersfield offers a variety of classes on the Antelope Valley College campus.

University of LaVerne

41253 12th St. West, Palmdale (818) 846-4008

University of LaVerne hosts a satellite campus in Palmdale and offers four-year bachelor's degrees and master's degrees in business administration and health services management.

HOSPITALS

Antelope Valley Hospital

1600 West Ave. J, Lancaster, (661) 949-5000

Lancaster Community Hospital

43830 10th Street West. Lancaster, (661) 948-4781

High Desert Hospital

44900 N. 60th Street West, Lancaster, (661) 948-8581



MUSEUMS

Antelope Valley African-American Museum

416 W. Lumber, Lancaster (661) 723-0811

The museum begins at the beginning of mankind and continues depicting mankind through today with artifacts, sculptures and international art.

Antelope Valley Indian Museum

15701 East Avenue M., Lancaster (661) 946-3055

www.avim.av.org

Originally built as a private home, the museum is built into and around the rocks of Piute Butte in the Mojave Desert. The museum highlights the valley's Indian culture.

Lancaster Museum/Art Gallery

44801 Sierra Highway, Lancaster (661) 723-6250

www.city.lancaster.ca.us/parks.htm

The museum and gallery feature a variety of local, regional and international art and historic exhibits. The gallery hosts a rotating exhibit, a juried all-media art exhibition and a student art exhibition.

Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Museum

15650 Seneca Rd., Victorville, Calif. (760) 243-4547

www.royrogers.com

The museum hosts the personal and professional memorabilia of the western television stars.

Twenty Mule Team Museum

26962 Twenty Mule Team Road Boron, Calif. (760) 762-5810

The museum embraces both the history of aerospace as forged at Edwards and the history of the famous Borax Twenty Mule Team days, all in a renovated house that used to be near a borax mine campsite.

Western Hotel Museum

557 West Lancaster Blvd. (661) 723-6260

www.cityoflancasterca.org/Parks/westernhotel.htm Lancaster's oldest structure displays Antelope Valley artifacts. Still visible on a sidewalk behind the museum are the footprints of a young Frances Gumm, better known as Judy Garland, from the days of her childhood in Lancaster.



Antelope Valley Mall

SHOPPING

Lancaster and Palmdale provide base personnel extensive shopping opportunities. Both feature virtually every national and regional retail store, making it unnecessary to travel outside the Antelope Valley for goods and services.

Lancaster's main shopping area is located on Valley Central Way just off California State Highway 14 at exits for either avenue I or J. about 30 minutes from base housing. Palmdale's primary shopping area is anchored by the Antelope Valley Mall, the area's only covered shopping mall, located on West Avenue P, just off the California State Highway 14 at the exit for 10th Street, about 40 minutes from base housing.

Also popular are the outlet stores in Barstow, located one hour west of the base off California State Highway 58, and in Ontario, about one and a half hours south of the base near the intersections of interstate highways 10 and 15.

Large mall complexes in the Los Angeles area are one to two hours away via California State Highway 14.

TRANSPORTATION

Antelope Valley Airport Express

42540 6th Street East, Lancaster (661) 945-2529

AV Airport Express offers the only airport shuttle to Los Angeles International Airport from the Antelope Valley.

Antelope Valley Transit Authority

1031 West Ave. L-12, Lancaster (661) 945-9445, www.avta.com

The AV Transit Authority provides local public bus transportation primarily within Palmdale and Lancaster. Commuter transit between the Antelope Valley and the Los Angeles metropolitan area is also available. Dial-a-ride service is offered for senior citizens and disabled individuals.

Greyhound Bus Company

44949 North Yucca, Lancaster (661) 945-2827

Metro-Link

(800) 371-5465

Built in the aftermath of the 1994 Northridge earthquake, the Metro-Link stations and commuter train service provide residents with a convenient and affordable mode of travel to the Los Angeles area.

Palmdale Airport

Currently, there is no commercial passenger flight travel in the Antelope Valley. However, developers are working to attract commercial flights to the Palmdale Airport.

Parks and Recreation

Lancaster National Soccer Center

43000 30th St. East, Lancaster

This 169-acre complex with 32 fields attracts regional and national tournaments to Lancaster, in addition to serving local youth and adult soccer teams. It's the largest facility of its kind in the western United States.

Lancaster City Park and Big 8 Softball Complex

43011 10th St. West, Lancaster (661) 723-6276

The park features the Stanley Kleiner Activity Center, a children's playground and tennis center with eight lighted courts. The largest of all softball complexes in California, the Big 8 is known as the "Softball Tournament Destination Location."

Saddleback Butte State Park

Avenue J and 170th Street East, Lancaster (661) 942-0662, www.calparksmojave.com Hiking is available through park trails. Camping is also available for a fee at any of 40 campsites.

Red Rock Canyon State Park

California State Highway 14, Mojave (661) 942-0662, www.calparksmojave.com Located 23 miles northeast of Mojave, the park features spectacular red and gray sandstones that have eroded into a variety of shapes.